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Leza L Olson 08/31/2006 09:18:11 AM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 03457

SIPDIS

CXTelA:

ACTION: ECON
INFO: IPSC SCI IMO CONS RES POL DCM AMB AID FCS PD
ADM

DISSEMINATION: ECON

CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:RJONES

DRAFTED: ECON:RRUFFER

CLEARED: DCM:GCRETZ, ECON:WWEINSTEIN

VZCZCTV1399

OO RUEHC RUEHXK

DE RUEHTV #3457 2421540

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6008

INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 003457

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2016

TAGS: KWBG PREL PGOV IS

SUBJECT: SPIEGEL DENIES RAFAH CLOSED TO PRESSURE PA TO
RELEASE SHALIT

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Ha'aretz reported today, August 30, that the IDF and Shin Bet recommended six days ago that the GOI keep Rafah crossing closed to pressure the Palestinians to release kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit. Ha'aretz apparently obtained a copy of a transcript from a Ministry of Defense (MOD) meeting where the recommendation was made, and the article claims that this is the first time that it has been proven that Rafah has been closed for reasons other than terror alerts.

¶2. (C) Brig. Gen. (ret.) Baruch Spiegel and Lt. Col. Oded Herman told EconCouns and econoff on August 30 that the crossing is not closed to pressure the Palestinians to release Shalit. They said that this is not the MOD's official position, and that the meeting cited above was only a preparatory meeting to begin working on the extension of the Rafah mandate, which expires in November. Spiegel said that he and others wrote a strong recommendation to Defense Minister Amir Peretz to open the crossing on a continuous basis as soon as possible, and that Peretz will be evaluating the recommendation today or tomorrow.

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JONES